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SPACE

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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 50 for State, Army and Air Departments from SA - Section I.

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SUMMARY

During the past week the Communist Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo's wide range of activities illustrated its security in Guatemalan life. Víctor Manuel GUTIERREZ, Guatemala's Communist labor chieftain, and others of the delegation just back from Moscow, were reporting to the labor unions on their trip; an invitation was issued for a regional Youth Festival in October 1954; the Communist-controlled national labor federation agitated for the release of Salvador Cayetano CARPIO, the Salvadoran labor leader; and a "Day of Solidarity With the Viet-Namese People" was set for December 19. Meanwhile, looking forward to the January-March interval between crop years, the party newspaper began another campaign demanding more rapid implementation of the Agrarian Reform.

President Eisenhower's speech to the United Nations was warmly applauded by the independent press which doubted, however, if the Soviets would respond. The Communist organ remained silent, while a leftist paper thought that the "warmongering" U.S. President had been intimidated by Soviet atomic might and the people's desire for peace.

In the struggle of ideologies for the Guatemalan mind, the U.S. motion picture industry's embargo on sending films to Guatemala until a tax matter is cleared up has resulted in contracts for more Argentine films and the offer of Soviet films to local theaters.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Communist Activities: The week's budget of Communist activities illustrated the many areas in which the Communist PGT is now active. In the ten days since their return from Moscow Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez, Communist Secretary General of the national labor federation, CGTG, and Leonardo CASTILLO Flores, Communist-oriented Secretary General of the agricultural federation, CNCG, have been reporting to the press and union meetings about their observations in

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the Soviet Union, and this week they were official speakers at the opening of the National Agrarian Bank in Quezaltenango. At the same time, the CGTG mobilized its member unions to send messages protesting the Salvadoran Government's re-arrest of Salvador Cayetano Carpio, the Salvadoran labor leader, and the Communist Tribuna Popular continued a front-page campaign on his behalf. The CGTG also announced plans to observe December 19 as a "Day of Solidarity With the Viet-Namese People." The Unión de Compradores de Lotes, a Communist-sponsored group of low-cost building lot owners protesting alleged abuses by real estate promoters, demonstrated before the City Hall, calling the anti-Communist Mayor a "gangster" and "grafters' accomplice," and its activities shared Tribuna Popular's front page with the Carpio case. The Organizing Committee of the "Festival of Youth of Central America and the Caribbean," of which the Communist Hugo BARRIOS Klée is Secretary General, issued an invitation to the conference, setting its date as October 1954.

Tribuna Popular revived the Communist demand for a more rapid handing over of lands to farm workers under the Agrarian Reform Law in the January-March interval between crop years. Similar agitation last year resulted in a series of rural disturbances during that period.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Independent Press Applauds President Eisenhower's UN Speech: Guatemalan independent newspapers, which have lately been silent on or unimpressed by U.S. policy, quickly changed their attitude to applaud the quality of President Eisenhower's speech to the United Nations, but doubted that its substance would have any effect on the Soviet Union. El Imparcial, the largest newspaper, which has particularly ignored U.S. policy statements recently, asked in a front-page editorial, "Will the Soviet World understand this heroic soldier turned apostle? Will it understand the peaceful warning similar to the vain announcements made by Wilson and Roosevelt in an effort to prevent the first two world conflagrations? It is hard to believe." Prensa Libre said, "It is a clear expression of a statesman's preoccupation with the terrible reality of the atomic era."

The Communist party organ, doubtless delaying to read the Soviet view, has not yet begun to editorialize, but the leftist Diario del Pueblo thought, "It is very important that now Eisenhower, who from the heights of the Presidency of the U.S. has worked to take his country into a new war, realizes the victory that any power could obtain in this war...would be a victory over ruins." The newspaper said the President was influenced by the recognition of the "great monopolies" that the U.S. atomic monopoly was a myth, and by the Bermuda Conference where he learned that the people of the Old World would not support a new war.

Displacement of American Films From the Guatemalan Market: American commercial films, the Guatemalan public's principal means of visualizing the United States, are gradually disappearing from Guatemalan theaters and being replaced by European and Latin American products due to the U.S. film exporters' ban on shipment of films to Guatemala in effect since September 1 due to the American companies' unwillingness to pay a tax imposed by the Guatemala City Government (Weeka 36, September 4, 1953, Section II). With stocks of American films on hand about to run out, Guatemalan exhibitors have already increased the proportion of French and Italian films and have recently signed a contract to obtain 60 Argentine films. It has also been reported that one theater chain, which has exhausted its reserves, has been offered 13 Soviet films, one of which, "The Great Concert," is in fact already being advertised in a local theater.

INTERNATIONAL

Press Comment on Ambassador Toriello's UN Speech Protesting U.S. Press Attacks: Both independent and pro-government papers gave extensive coverage to Ambassador Toriello's November 30 speech to the United Nations General Assembly condemning attacks on Guatemala in the U.S. Press. The independent El Imparcial thought that the way to meet the problem was for the government to recommend to its followers a change in their policy of attacking the Western countries as "imperialists," "fascists," and "warmongers" because if it failed to do so the U.S. could also plead that respect for freedom of expression forbade them to seek a change in the policy of the U.S. press. The government Diario de Centro América repeated this argument, saying no one was attacking the U.S. "as a people," that the anti-Guatemalan campaign was being carried on by the "great monopolies," and Guatemala was merely defending itself.

MILITARY

Friction Between the Army and Guardia Civil? A dance held on December 7 to celebrate the day of the Guardia Civil, the national police, gave a faint hint at some coolness between ranking officers of the Guatemalan Army and Colonel Rogelio CRUZ Wer, the Guardia's Director. The occasion was notable for the absence of many senior Army officers, the remark of one who was present that Colonel Cruz Wer had a phobia about Army officers and was awkward in dealing with them, and the evident exasperation of several Army officers present with the slovenly way their colleagues of the Guardia ran the dance. While these indications scarcely add up

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to proof that a serious cleavage exists between the two organizations, they do point up the types of jealousies which can be exploited by interested parties.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

William L. Krieg
Counselor of Embassy

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Colonel A. E. McCormick, Army Attaché

cc: C.A. Missions & Routine

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